

## REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-53325

Date: 16/08/2025

**Title: The Effect of Strategic Orientations on Performance.**

### Recommendation:

**Accept after minor revision.**

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	✓			
Techn. Quality			✓	
Clarity		✓		
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Dr. Bishwajit Rout

Date: 16/08/2025

### Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

*(To be published with the manuscript in the journal)*

*The reviewer is requested to provide a brief comment (3-4 lines) highlighting the significance, strengths, or key insights of the manuscript. This comment will be Displayed in the journal publication alongside with the reviewers name.*

- Significance:** This study is significant as it addresses the underexplored relationship between multiple strategic orientations market, entrepreneurial, and technological and firm performance in SMEs within an emerging economy. By focusing on Iraq, it expands research beyond developed contexts, offering empirical insights that guide SMEs in adopting integrated strategic orientations to enhance competitiveness, sustainability, and economic contribution in challenging market environments.
- Strength:** The research's strength lies in its comprehensive approach, simultaneously examining three strategic orientations instead of treating them in isolation. Using a robust sample of 388 SMEs and Structural Equation Modelling, it establishes empirical validity. The study's methodological rigor, contextual relevance to emerging markets, and actionable implications for SME managers provide both scholarly contributions and practical managerial guidance.
- Key Insight:** The key insight is that market, entrepreneurial, and technological orientations each exert a positive and significant impact on SME performance, with entrepreneurial orientation showing the strongest effect. This demonstrates that SMEs in emerging markets achieve superior outcomes when they strategically blend responsiveness to customer needs, proactive opportunity-seeking, and technological innovation, rather than relying on a single orientation.

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### *Reviewer's Comment / Report*

The paper titled “*The Effect of Strategic Orientations on Performance.*” investigates the impact of market orientation (MO), entrepreneurial orientation (EO), and technological orientation (TO) on SME performance in Iraq's emerging market. Using SEM on data from 388 SMEs, it reveals positive effects of these orientations on firm performance, emphasizing their role in enhancing competitiveness amid resource constraints. The findings bridge gaps in strategic management research for developing economies, offering practical guidance for SMEs to integrate these orientations for improved efficiency, innovation, and growth.

#### **Suggestions for Improvement:**

1. In introduction, structure the introduction more clearly by moving from (1) importance of SMEs → (2) gaps in literature → (3) objectives of current study.
2. In introduction, some sentences are overly long and repetitive (e.g., lines 53–62). Simplification would improve readability.
3. Add a stronger statement of research questions.
4. In Literature Review, reduce redundancy: Several definitions overlap across sources without adding new insights.
5. In Literature Review, Hypotheses could be written more formally (e.g., “H1: Market orientation is positively associated with firm performance among SMEs in Iraq”).
6. Clarify sampling technique (convenience, random, stratified?). Current wording “convenient resource” is vague.
7. Data collection timeline says “June 2025” (likely a typo should be corrected).
8. Better explain why Iraq is chosen as context (cultural/economic uniqueness).
9. Discuss potential common method bias remedies beyond Harman's test.
10. Provide descriptive statistics (means, SDs) for constructs in a separate table.
11.  $R^2$  value for firm performance is low (0.12) discuss implications (weak explanatory power).

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This paper makes a valuable contribution by examining the simultaneous effect of market, entrepreneurial, and technology orientations on SME performance in Iraq. The study is methodologically sound and addresses an underexplored context. However, it requires improvements in clarity, theoretical grounding, and interpretation of results. With revisions, it can provide stronger academic and practical insights. Addressing the identified weaknesses will make it suitable for publication in IJAR.

I recommend this paper for publication after minor revision.